

Greater Nashua Continuum of Care
Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
April 9, 2014

Cate Sementa, Co-Chair called the meeting to order at 8:33am.

Present at the meeting were:

Bob Mack, City Welfare	Peter Kelleher, Partnership for Successful Living
Dawn Reams, Bridges	Linda Cataldo, HMIS
Wendy LeBlanc, HIV Taskforce	Lori Piper, Merrimack County Savings Bank
Kathie MacIntyre, Title I / Nashua School District	Jennifer Vandy, Neighborworks Southern New Hampshire
Annette Escalante, Keystone Hall	Ana Pancine, Harbor Homes
Cate Sementa, Harbor Homes	Lisa Christie, Nashua Soup Kitchen & Shelter Center
Abigail Alicea, Greater Nashua Mental Health Center	Donna Curley, HMIS
Beth Todgham, Southern New Hampshire Services	

Minutes of the March 12, 2014 meeting were reviewed. Lori made a motion to accept the minutes; Annette seconded. Minutes were approved. Introductions were made around the table.

HEARTH Implementation

Wendy updated the group on the Ad Hoc committee meeting. Discussions revolved around the three changes that need to be addressed as part of the changes to the HEARTH Act: the new governance charter, change in board structure and coordinated intake. The good news is that the deadline on the coordinated intake piece is not the end of August, as originally thought. This portion is considered a work in progress that we can show we are working on achieving. Wendy indicated that there were a couple of changes that needed to be made to the governance charter. They will be made so the full GNCOC can vote on the final document at the June meeting. We continue to work towards the updated Board structure (no longer Executive Committee, membership, term limits) and those changes should be in place by the fall. We may have to move the vote on a new slate of officers up to the June or August meeting to meet deadlines. Kevin O'Meara has agreed to join the board as a homeless/formerly homeless representative. Representation from other identified subpopulations has already been achieved. Entire slate of members of the Board of Directors will need to be voted in. The data collection process needs to be refined in terms of performance goals. Ad Hoc Committee is looking at process developed in Manchester to see if it would apply to the GNCOC.

Centralized Intake/Assessment continues to be an area that needs to be addressed. Wendy has been approved for 15 hours of technical assistance from HUD. She spoke with our contact for an hour and was told that there is no set deadline for this part of the implementation. Guidelines are very vague; guidance was to keep it as local as possible. Donna Curley is getting little guidance in the role that HMIS will play in the Centralized Intake/Assessment process.

Cate mentioned that there are advantages in coordinating with the state – at least at some level. Being able to coordinate services/resources available to clients would be a benefit. There was a strong belief expressed that our current “no wrong door” approach has worked well for the Greater Nashua community.

State group addressing the issue has not met and has no plans to meet at this point.

Peter had offered the idea of holding a half-day summit on Centralized Intake/Assessment. The entire general membership of the GNCOC would be invited in an effort to gain buy-in into the process by the entire community and to build commitment.

Summit would need to be of value to the individuals attending – answer the question on how being involved with this process will impact their day-to-day work. Would also need to be timed in a way that ideas/information is gathered at a stage of development where those ideas can be incorporated into the planning on how the Centralized Intake/Assessment will work in our community.

Peter observed that all of the key players are already at the table – but that we do a better job when everyone is working together and not doing their own thing. Need to develop a process that is non-threatening and involves all who want to be involved while making every effort to keep those who are not involved aware of the issue. He described three circles of involvement: those who want nothing to do with homelessness, those who are willing to act in a referral capacity when the opportunity presents itself and those who are actively involved with the process.

Manchester has developed an intake form which members of our group received via email earlier. The Ad Hoc committee will review the document at their next meeting for possible use/amending for use by the GNCOC.

HMIS

Donna and her team are working to address changes that come with implementation of the HEARTH Act and the Centralized Intake/Assessment piece. She indicated that all forms will need to be changed as well as the policies and procedures they currently follow. It has been difficult to get answers from HUD. The changes in the data standards have not been released. Once they are, they will have six months to implement the changes.

Donna indicated that the current HMIS vendor has an add-on to their software that could help with the Centralized Intake/Assessment process. Using data entered by intake staff, the system is capable of referring that client to the most appropriate service provider to meet their needs. Procedure assumes that HMIS software would be available to agency intake personnel which are not true in agencies such as the Soup Kitchen, for example. We would also need to have an open HMIS system for this to work; we currently don't and not all organizations who serve as receiving agencies are on the HMIS system.

Bob noted that the problem isn't getting people into shelters; we do that well. The challenge is getting folks out of shelters and into permanent housing.

211 was mentioned as a possible statewide resource for Centralized Intake/Assessment. Previous discussions have already indicated that they lack the capacity to handle this on a statewide basis.

Other Issues/Discussion

- **Commitment from housing suppliers to allocate percentage of their inventory towards permanent housing:** Peter presented this idea as a possible solution to having housing available to those who need it (when they are ready to move into permanent housing) on a more consistent basis. This is something that needs to be addressed during the project planning phase. Jennifer indicated that reserving special units for this purpose can be a challenge because units can't be held vacant waiting for a tenant. Bob indicated how frustrating the process is for people who have been on the waiting list for years to be told they have housing, but need to come up with a security deposit quickly in order to take advantage of the opportunity. Although there are sources in the community for security deposit loans, it's not always possible to go through process quickly enough to get the money needed in the time allotted. It was also noted that an on-going issue is the ability of the individual to pay the rent; rental subsidies were discussed as a possible solution.

Follow-up question was whether the Ending Homelessness Fund could be used for this purpose or whether it was limited only to providing housing for the chronically homeless. Peter indicated that uses for the fund would be reviewed after the first year and changes that matched the on-going needs of the community were possible.

- **Point In Time:** Work is on-going in making sure the information provided on the Point In Time Count is correct. Agencies that conducted the count should contact Miles and either confirm that their numbers were correct as originally submitted or provide updates so the information can be forwarded to the state and HUD by the end of the month.
- **Data Gathering Committee:** Membership on the committee is required from all agencies who receive HUD funding. In addition, Bob will continue to serve on the committee. It was suggested that a member of the NOFA review panel be asked to serve as well. Group will be charged with developing the policies and procedures on how projects will be monitored through information provided on the APRs. Abigail was recruited and accepted the responsibility for leading the committee.
- **Title I/Kathie MacIntyre:** As a new member of the group, Kathie was asked to share her observations of what was discussed at the meeting. She is charged with addressing the issue of helping students and families within the school district facing homelessness and was amazed by the amount of support/resources that existed based on the conversation at the meeting. In the past they have used the funds they have available to pay for driver's education for a student and making it possible for students to attend the prom. They have funds available to address the issue and are looking forward to working with the group to increase ways that her student population can benefit from the resources available to them.
- **Domestic Violence:** Victims of Domestic Violence is an identified subpopulation under the new HEARTH guidelines. With Dawn's help, group will continue to develop ways to incorporate their needs, etc. into work performed by the GNCOC.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:00am.

Minutes prepared by Beth Todgham of Southern New Hampshire Services.

Next meeting: Wednesday, May 14, 2014
 8:30 am – Harbor Homes